

STATE HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY OF IOWA  
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

# The Annals of Iowa

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Volume 1 | Number 3 ( 1893)

pps. 231-233

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## River Land Investigation

ISSN 0003-4827

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### Recommended Citation

"River Land Investigation." *The Annals of Iowa* 1 (1893), 231-233.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.1939>

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school in consequence of the necessities of his family at home. He was, therefore, possessed of much military knowledge. Before the war, he had attained a conspicuous position as a lawyer, and was known throughout the State as a shrewd and most active Democratic politician. He was a wide-awake, breezy, large-hearted, "good fellow," possessing great personal popularity. He entered the service in very feeble health, but rose rapidly to the rank of Brigadier-General, and but for his untimely death would very soon have been made a Major-General, with a lower rank in the regular army. Some day we hope to present a sketch of his most brilliant career. Just now we simply place on record the fact that his friends, Messrs. P. M. Casady, J. S. Polk, Geo. G. Wright, Barlow Granger, Isaac Brandt, Geo. Whitaker, J. W. Cheek, E. L. Marsh, R. S. Finkbine, Hoyt Sherman, B. F. Gue and Charles Aldrich, have caused to be cut upon his monument in Woodland Cemetery the famous words which General Grant wrote in his book—"General Crocker was fit to command an independent army"—than which one hero could not more highly compliment another. These words cut in the marble block are duly credited—"U. S. GRANT."

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#### RIVER LAND INVESTIGATION.

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Under direction of Hon. Hoke Smith, Secretary of the Interior, an agent of the Department has been engaged during the past summer in investigating the claims of settlers upon the Des Moines River lands. The end in view is to secure from Congress indemnity for their losses. The great case in their behalf, which was taken to the Supreme Court of the United States by the Attorney General of Iowa, having failed, this course is the only one left. However, it does not vary in any material respect from that instituted and ably prosecuted by Hon. Cyrus C. Carpenter in his first term as Governor. Hon. John F. Duncombe was then a member of the Iowa House of Representatives, and earnestly supported the measure. Under the law which was passed, with little or no oppo-

sition, three Commissioners were appointed, who, after a protracted investigation, submitted their report July 25, 1872, "on the extent of losses of settlers upon Des Moines River lands by reason of failure of title." This was printed in a pamphlet, now very scarce, of about 60 pages. On the 3d of March, 1873, Congress passed an act providing for another Commission, which also submitted a report November 20, 1873, covering substantially the same ground. As a result of these efforts a bill passed the House of Representatives, largely through the efforts of Hon. Jackson Orr, then in Congress from the Ft. Dodge District, under which the settlers would have received something over \$400,000—but it failed in the Senate, owing doubtless to the powerful opposition of Senator Pratt, of Indiana. This new effort is based upon the idea of fair indemnity, precisely as it was advocated by Governor Carpenter and Mr. Duncombe in 1872. It is certainly to be hoped that the action of Congress will be more propitious to the settlers than that of twenty years ago.

As a part of the history of the times we copy the following notice—August 17, 1893—to the settlers by the special agent of the Interior Department:

RIVER LAND INVESTIGATION.

*To Whom it May Concern:*

All parties interested are hereby notified that the commission appointed by the Secretary of the Interior under the sundry civil appropriation act of March 3, 1893, touching the Des Moines River Land Grant, will hold its sitting at Fort Dodge on the 16th. The sitting will begin at 9 A. M. and continue from day to day. The object of the investigation is to ascertain the sum or sums paid by the holders of certificates or patents to said lands, their heirs or assigns, to purchase the paramount title as settled by the decisions of the courts; and also the value of such paramount title in case where the purchase has not been made by any of the holders of such certificates or patents, and to ascertain such other facts as are necessary to enable the United States to properly and equitably adjust the claims of persons who entered upon such lands receiving from the proper officers written evidence of such entry or settlement upon any of said lands. The inquiry will cover the original holders of certificates and patents and also the present owners holding such original certificates and patents. Parties will facilitate the inquiry by presenting with their titles an abstract of the same. After completing the work at this point the commission will hold sittings in the counties where the lands are situated, of which notice will be given.

ROBERT L. BERNER, *Special Agent.*

Mr. Berner will visit Stratford previous to coming to Fort Dodge.

The Fort Dodge *Messenger* of August 17 spoke of this effort as follows :

On Tuesday Hon. Robert L. Berner, accompanied by his secretary, Mr. T. E. Fletcher, and his stenographer, Mr. A. M. Speer, arrived in this city and registered at the Duncombe House. Mr. Berner is the special commissioner appointed by Hon. Hoke Smith, Secretary of the Interior, to investigate the claims of the *bona fide* settlers on what is known as the Des Moines River Land Grant. At the last session of Congress a bill was passed providing for this investigation, the object being to ascertain the sum or sums paid by the holders of certificates or patents to said land, their heirs or assigns, to purchase the paramount title as settled by the decisions of the courts ; and also the value of such paramount title in cases where the purchase has not been made by any of the holders of such certificates or patents, and to ascertain such other facts as are necessary to enable the United States to properly and equitably adjust the claims of persons who entered upon such lands, receiving from the proper officers written evidence of entry or settlement upon any of said lands. The inquiry will cover the original holders of certificates and patents, and also the present owners holding under such original certificates and patents. Parties will facilitate the inquiry by presenting with their titles an abstract of the same.

Mr. Berner's report will contain a full history of the claims against the Government by the settlers, so that the Government can make an appropriation to repay the settlers the amounts originally paid to the Government for the land, averaging about \$1.50 per acre. He also wants information concerning the improvements made and all transfers. The report is to be submitted at the next regular session of Congress. Mr. Berner desires that all parties in this county who are interested should call on him during his stay in Fort Dodge this week and next. His headquarters will be at the Duncombe House, but his work will be carried on in the office of the County Recorder in the court house.

Mr. Berner has a list of about two hundred claims in this county against the Government, on land to which the United States Government gave the settlers a title. He is not authorized to investigate any other cases. Mr. Berner states, however, that he will hear any claims in which he considers there is any considerable amount of equity and present them to Congress.

Mr. Berner expects to remain in Fort Dodge until Friday, August 25, and hopes to hear from every settler who has a claim against the Government during that time. He stopped at Stratford yesterday and investigated several cases but found he could make no progress without the county records. The commission was in session at Boone for a week and in that time heard all but two cases scheduled there.

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### AN INTERESTING SPECIMEN OF COPPER.

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Col. Warren S. Dungan, of Chariton, has sent to the Historical Department a specimen of Iowa copper, which has attracted considerable attention. It was on exhibition at the

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